

The background features a light gray rectangular area. Inside, there are several stylized elements: a large red star on the left, three smaller blue stars in the upper right, and four blue silhouettes of people in the center and right, some with arms raised. A blue silhouette of a mountain range is in the bottom left corner.

# **Ethics in EMS Education**

**Texas Department of  
State Health Services  
EMS Coordinator's Course**

# Ethics

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- Not laws
  - Are rules
- Not religion
  - Are sacred
- Not manners
  - Are mannerisms

**Professional actions  
and behaviors**



# Who Defines Ethics?

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- Not you
  - Not based on personal beliefs
- Based on societal beliefs
  - Industry / Profession
  - State regulations
    - Code Ethics
    - Coordinator / instructor rule
  - Supervisor / Employer
  - Courts



# Who Defines Ethics

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## Discussion

Who violates ethics?



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## Quote

Fame follows years and decades of exemplary performance, hundreds and thousands of good deeds - or one mistake.

- How do you want to be known – or remembered?



# Cost of Violation is High

- Often more than the sum of its parts





# Planned Application of Ethics

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- Faculty selection
  - Academic preparation to teach
- Policies and procedures
  - Reflect **Affective** grading component
  - Reflect faculty evaluation
  - Punishment
  - Due Process
- Grading Schemes / Assignments
  - Why is your cut score, your cut score?
  - Grading, grammar, spelling, style



# Ethical Situations

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## Quote

“I could get 100% success on the National Registry too, but I’d only be passing 3 or 4 of my 20 students.”





# Ethical Situations

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## Quote

“I could get 100% success on the National Registry too, but I’d only be passing 3 or 4 of my 20 students.”

- Do you see an ethical concern here?
  - When we “graduate” a student, and give a course completion certificate:
    - What are we telling the student?
    - What are we telling the public?
  - Does this apply whether the student passes or fails the registry? Does number of attempts matter?



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## Quote

“Learn the skill this way for the test. When you get into the field you can learn to do it the real way.”



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## Quote

“Learn the skill this way for the test. When you get into the field you can learn to do it the real way.”

- Do you see an ethical concern here?
  - Is there a difference between the “tested” way and the “real” way?
  - What do you tell lab instructors / preceptors about teaching the “real” way?



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## Quote

“This class is tough. By the end of the course, over half of you will not be here.”



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## Quote

“This class is tough. By the end of the course, over half of you will not be here.”

- Do you see an ethical concern here?
  - Where is the real problem?
  - Is it:
    - ~~Dumb student~~ Financial need?
    - ~~Bad instructor~~ Poor entrance requirements?
    - ~~Poor course~~ Poor course design?
    - ~~Poor entrance~~ Bad instructors?
    - ~~Financial need~~ Dumb students?



# Ethical Issues for EMS Education

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**Is there an Ethical Concern?**

After class, the faculty invites students out  
for pizza . . .



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**Is there an Ethical Concern?**

**An instructor meets a student alone after class and invites her to his house**





- 
- Student / faculty relationships
    - Can educator's be “friends” with “students”?



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

An instructor has drinks with students . . .  
 . . . at a conference (while in uniform).  
 . . . at a holiday party.  
 . . . and gets loose about students / faculty  
 . . . and gets excessively drunk



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

An instructor regularly talks, in class, about needing to get home to have a beer to unwind, getting drunk on weekends, decisions / actions while drinking



- 
- Alcohol (The career-ending drug)
    - Is alcohol a drug?
    - Does it alter ability to make rational decisions?
    - Can your actions while drinking affect your professional reputation? Your Career?



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## **Is there an Ethical Concern?**

**An instructor has posted his weekend binges on his Facebook page – along with pictures of he and friends naked – and comments discussing the sexual orientations and dysfunctions of other faculty and students**



# ~~Social Media~~

- Alcohol (career ending drug)

- Can your actions on a personal (private) social media site affect your professional reputation? Your Career?



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

Student policy requires all students to be clean shaved and in a neat, clean uniform at all times while in class and on clinicals, yet the faculty is often unshaven, wearing t-shirts, earrings, nose rings, and dirty jeans.





- 
- Setting standards (one standard for all?)
    - Are student policies, faculty policies?
    - How are privileges earned / given?
    - How do you describe / enforce **Work Place Competencies**



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

A student with a diagnosed disability is given extra time for tests and allowed to take the exam in a private, quiet environment. A second student, without a diagnosed disability (although you suspect one exists) has requested the same accommodations.



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

A late 30's male instructor greets a young, attractive female student each day with a wink, smirk, and tight hug. When she comes to his office, he frequently says "I'd leave my wife for you," or "we would have beautiful children."



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

In order to appreciate what patients go through, the instructor requires that all students receive a small 20 j synchronized cardioversion and a two-minute period of pacing.



- 
- Protection of civil rights / students
    - Are all students treated fairly?
    - Are appropriate assistances / accommodations given with learning disabilities?
    - Is language appropriate?
      - Racial slurs
      - Profanity
      - Context / innuendos
    - Are students safe?



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

A part-time instructor has taught a class, outlining the benefits of his fire department's protocols while maligning the protocols of the competing service in the next town.



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

A student complains that instructors who also work for \_\_\_\_\_ EMS are spending additional time with the class members who also work there. There are allegations of favoritism during practical exams, intimate encounters, and providing test answers.





- 
- Outside employment
    - Does it create a bias?
    - Are your students also colleagues?
    - Do you serve as a preceptor?
      - To ALL students (or are you selective)?
    - Does it interfere with teaching?
    - Does it provide a benefit to teaching?



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

A student has complained to the dean that he has received a failing grade in clinical. He says that he arranged for the instructor to receive a discount on a new set of tires, and says he thought there was an “agreement” he would pass the class.



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- Gifts

- What constitutes a gift?
- What expectations are there from gifts?
- Will your supervisor see it that way?



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## **Is there an Ethical Concern?**

A recent program graduate comes to you to say that she has been unable to pass the National Registry after several attempts. She asks for help in preparing for the exam.



- 
- Post graduation guarantees and support
    - What expectations should a student have after course completion?
    - What obligations do you have to students after graduation?



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

Twenty minutes after stopping a student's clinical rotations because her CPR card had expired (and despite three warnings she says she has not had time to take a class) she presents you with a new CPR card signed by an adjunct instructor. He says he taught the class last month and forgot to give her a card.



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

Because of an increase in class size and decrease in clinical sites, the clinical coordinator has allowed students to count calls at work as internship experiences and told the students to have the paramedic on the next shift sign the paperwork so it is documented as activity on a non-work day.



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

A student informs you that another student has fabricated over 50 patient reports in his internship and in reality has not attended a single rotation. The clinical coordinator has not reviewed any of the documents because the involved student is the son of a high-ranking person at a local service.





- 
- Proper documentation
    - Legal rational for class / clinical eligibility
    - Legal expectations to course signatures
    - What are the ramifications of attempting to achieve certification through fraud or deception?
    - What about aiding others in fraud or deception?
      - Or not stopping fraud by others?



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## Is there an Ethical Concern?

Teaching an AEMT class you notice that the textbook has no information about orotracheal intubation or delivery of unprescribed medications to a patient. Since they are not in the book, PowerPoints, or test database, they are not covered.



- 
- Keeping up with State Standards
    - What responsibilities do you have when state standards are not covered in the textbook?
    - What obligations do you have to assure students earn the Texas requirements?



# Top 5: Why EMS Educators Get In Trouble

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1. Failure to apply / follow policies equally
2. Fraternizing with Students
3. Falsification / failure of documentation
4. Abusive / disrespectful behavior
5. Endangering / failing to protect students



# Contact Me

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**JEFF McDONALD**  
COORDINATOR  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAM

**Tarrant  
County  
College  
District**



828 Harwood Road  
Hurst, Texas 76054-3299  
(817) 515-6448  
(817) 515-6700 fax  
[jeff.mcdonald@tccd.edu](mailto:jeff.mcdonald@tccd.edu)  
[www.tccd.edu/ems](http://www.tccd.edu/ems)





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